

Amendments to the Drawings:

The drawing sheet attached in connection with the above-identified application containing Figure 5 is being presented as a new formal drawing sheet to be substituted for the previously submitted drawing sheet. Figure 5 has been amended. Appended to this amendment is an annotated copy of the previous drawing sheet which has been marked to show the changes presented in the replacement sheet.

The specific change which has been made to Figure 5 is that the leader line for reference numeral 311 has been shortened so as to point to the interface between the core 312 and the sleeve 318 where the channel 311 is located.

REMARKS

The Office Action has been reviewed and the Examiner's comments carefully considered. Claims 1, 3, and 22 have been amended. No claims have been added. Claim 23 has been canceled. Thus, claims 1-14 and 16-22 remain pending and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Specification

The disclosure is objected to because "rim 312" in the paragraph starting at page 8, line 26 should be "rim 313." This paragraph has been amended to correct this minor informality. For at least this reason, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully requested.

Drawings

The drawings have been objected to because the depiction of the core 312 and its structural relationship with the sleeve 318 in current Figure 5 is not supported by the original disclosure. It is respectfully submitted that there is support for the depiction of the core 312 and its structural relationship with the sleeve. Figure 5 is merely a formal drawing of the originally filed Figure 5. Also, the original specification states that "[a]s in the other embodiments, the dampener 314 may be a full ring housed within a channel 311 of the steering wheel core." (Page 8, lines 29-30.) One with ordinary skill in the art would understand such a description to mean that the dampener is placed in the channel 311 of the core 312 in the same manner as shown in Fig. 1. Also, page 9, lines 3-12 of the original specification states that a spring member 316 is positioned about the periphery of the dampener and in intimate contact therewith, that a sleeve 318 encapsulates or insulates the dampener/spring member assembly during the steering wheel foam mold process, and that the inner wall 322 of the sleeve 318 additionally provides a torsional surface wherein an outer surface 324 of the spring member 316 interfaces therewith. One with ordinary skill in the art would understand such the sleeve 318 encapsulates the dampener such that internal surface of the sleeve abuts the spring member. One with ordinary skill in the art would then conclude that the sleeve would be placed in the channel 311 of the core 312 so as to achieve the encapsulation of the dampener 314 and abut the outer surface 324 of the spring member 316. Thus, the original written description supports the depiction of the core 312 and its structural relationship with the sleeve 318, regardless of the originally filed Figure 5. Because

originally Figure 5 and the written description on pages 8-9 support the current Figure 5, the depiction shown in current Figure 5 does not constitute new matter.

The drawings are also objected to because the leader line for reference character 311 appears to point to the sleeve 318. Figure 5 has been amended to correct this minor informality.

For at least these reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejection

Claims 1-7 and 21-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0023517 (“Ochiai”). The rejection should be withdrawn because Ochiai does not disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention.

For example, claim 1 (as amended) recites a metal core member, a dampening element, at least one spring member, a sleeve encapsulating said dampening element, and a material covering the rim and the at least one dampening element, “wherein the dampening element, the at least one spring member, and the sleeve are secured within a portion of the rim.” Ochiai does not teach or suggest this combination of features.

Paragraph 6 of the Office Action states that outer skin 73 of Ochiai is considered to be the sleeve. However, outer skin 73 cannot be considered to be the sleeve because the outer skin 73 is located on the outside of the steering wheel (paragraph 0074 of the Ochiai), and is not secured within a portion of the rim. No other structure of Ochiai can satisfy the requirements of the sleeve, thus Ochiai does not teach or suggest this element of the claim. Accordingly, Ochiai does not teach or suggest all the features of claim 1.

Claims 2-7 and 21-22 depend from and contain all the features of claim 1, and is allowable therewith for at least the same reasons set forth above, without regard to the further patentable limitations contained therein.

Claim 23 has been canceled, which renders the rejection of this claim moot.

For at least these reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection based are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

The present application is now believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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FIG. 5.